

Offer The Fawn - The Water Riddle

(Inspired from the Hebrew source version of the bible)

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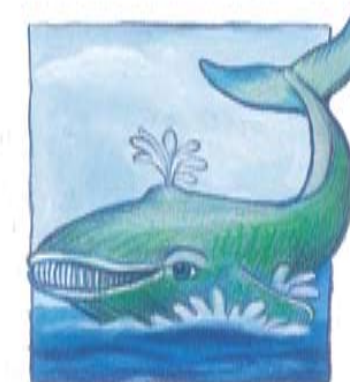
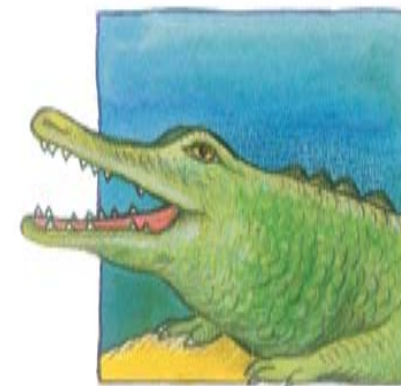
To all the children in the world

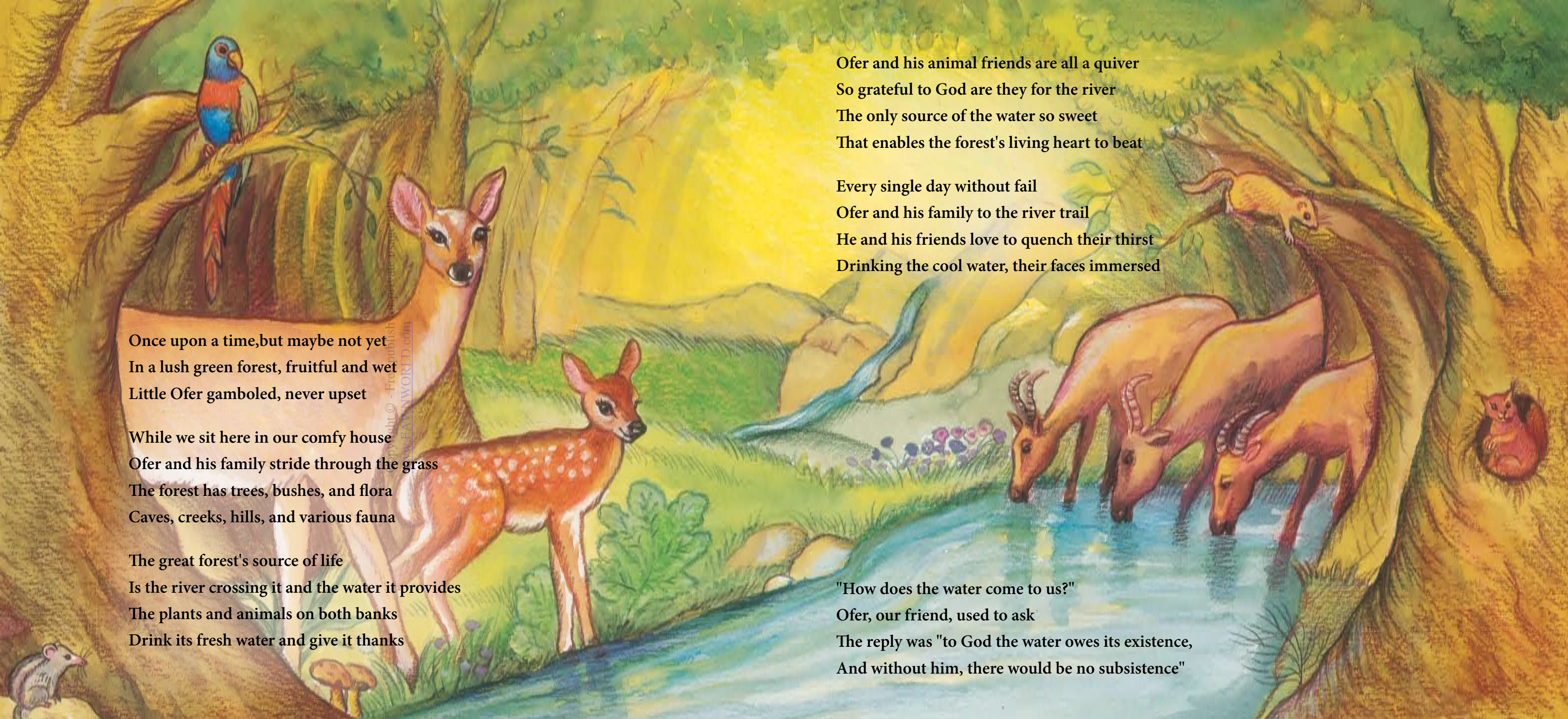
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Eran Ben-Shahar
Ofer The Fawn
The Water Riddle

Illustrations: Michal Zinger





Once upon a time, but maybe not yet
In a lush green forest, fruitful and wet
Little Ofer gamboled, never upset

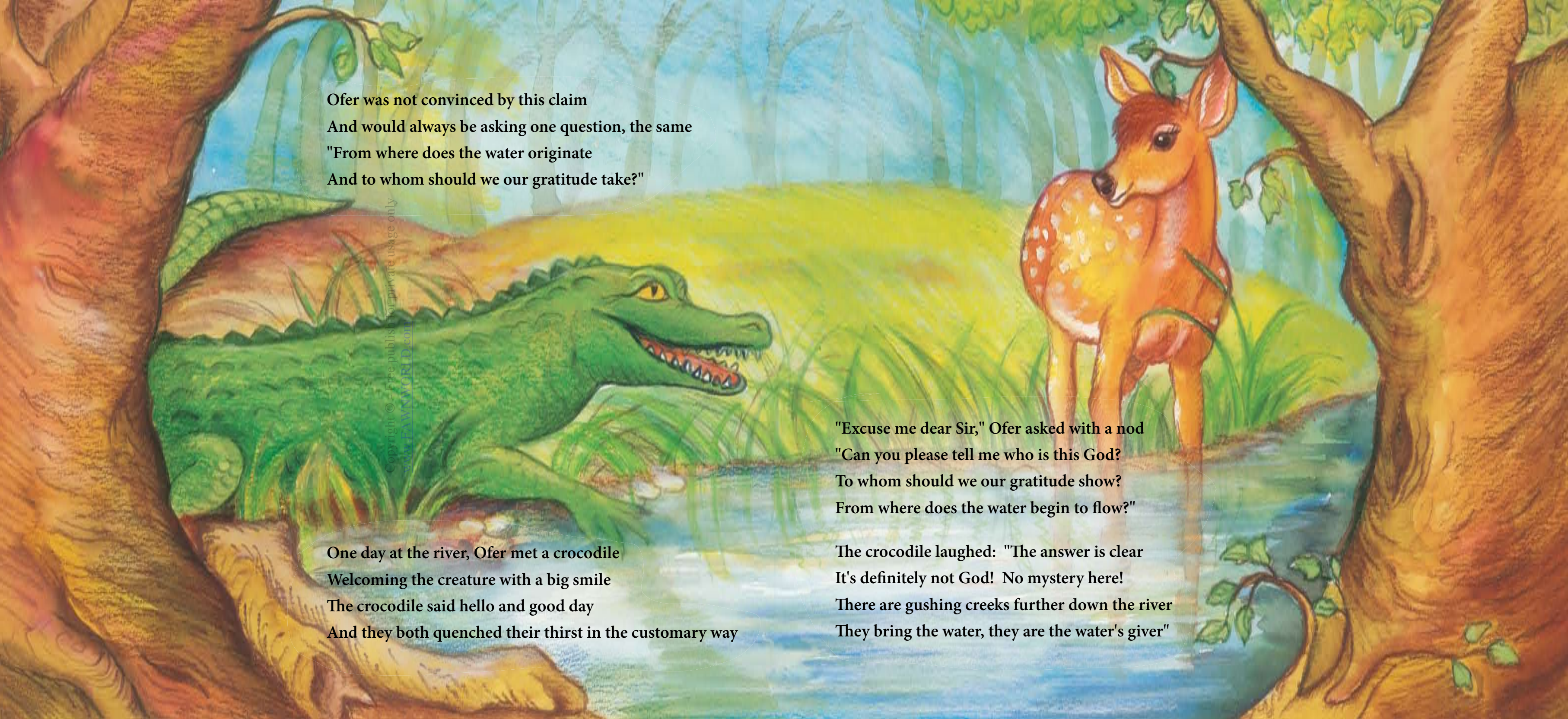
While we sit here in our comfy house
Ofer and his family stride through the grass
The forest has trees, bushes, and flora
Caves, creeks, hills, and various fauna

The great forest's source of life
Is the river crossing it and the water it provides
The plants and animals on both banks
Drink its fresh water and give it thanks

Ofer and his animal friends are all a quiver
So grateful to God are they for the river
The only source of the water so sweet
That enables the forest's living heart to beat

Every single day without fail
Ofer and his family to the river trail
He and his friends love to quench their thirst
Drinking the cool water, their faces immersed

"How does the water come to us?"
Ofer, our friend, used to ask
The reply was "to God the water owes its existence,
And without him, there would be no subsistence"

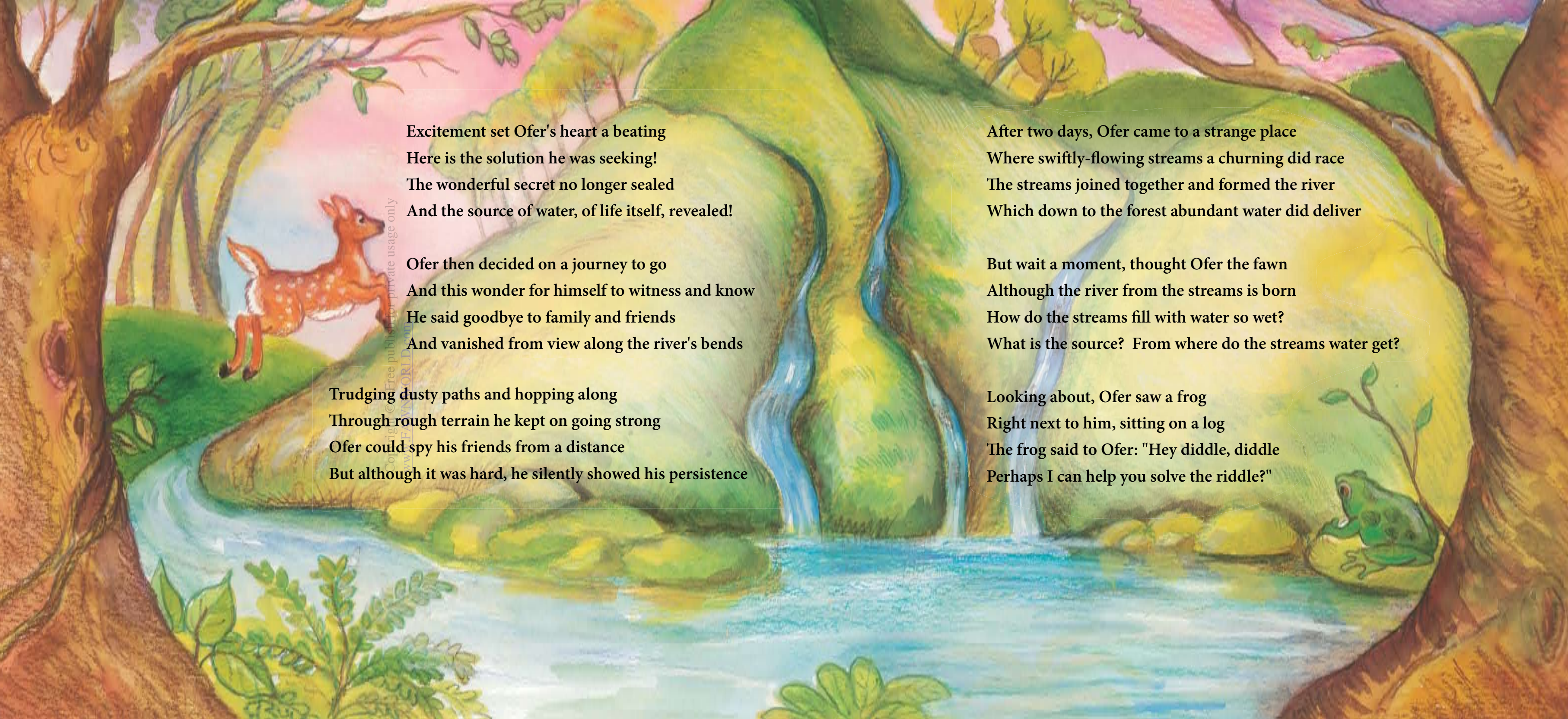


Ofer was not convinced by this claim
And would always be asking one question, the same
"From where does the water originate
And to whom should we our gratitude take?"

One day at the river, Ofer met a crocodile
Welcoming the creature with a big smile
The crocodile said hello and good day
And they both quenched their thirst in the customary way

"Excuse me dear Sir," Ofer asked with a nod
"Can you please tell me who is this God?
To whom should we our gratitude show?
From where does the water begin to flow?"

The crocodile laughed: "The answer is clear
It's definitely not God! No mystery here!
There are gushing creeks further down the river
They bring the water, they are the water's giver"



Excitement set Ofer's heart a beating
Here is the solution he was seeking!
The wonderful secret no longer sealed
And the source of water, of life itself, revealed!

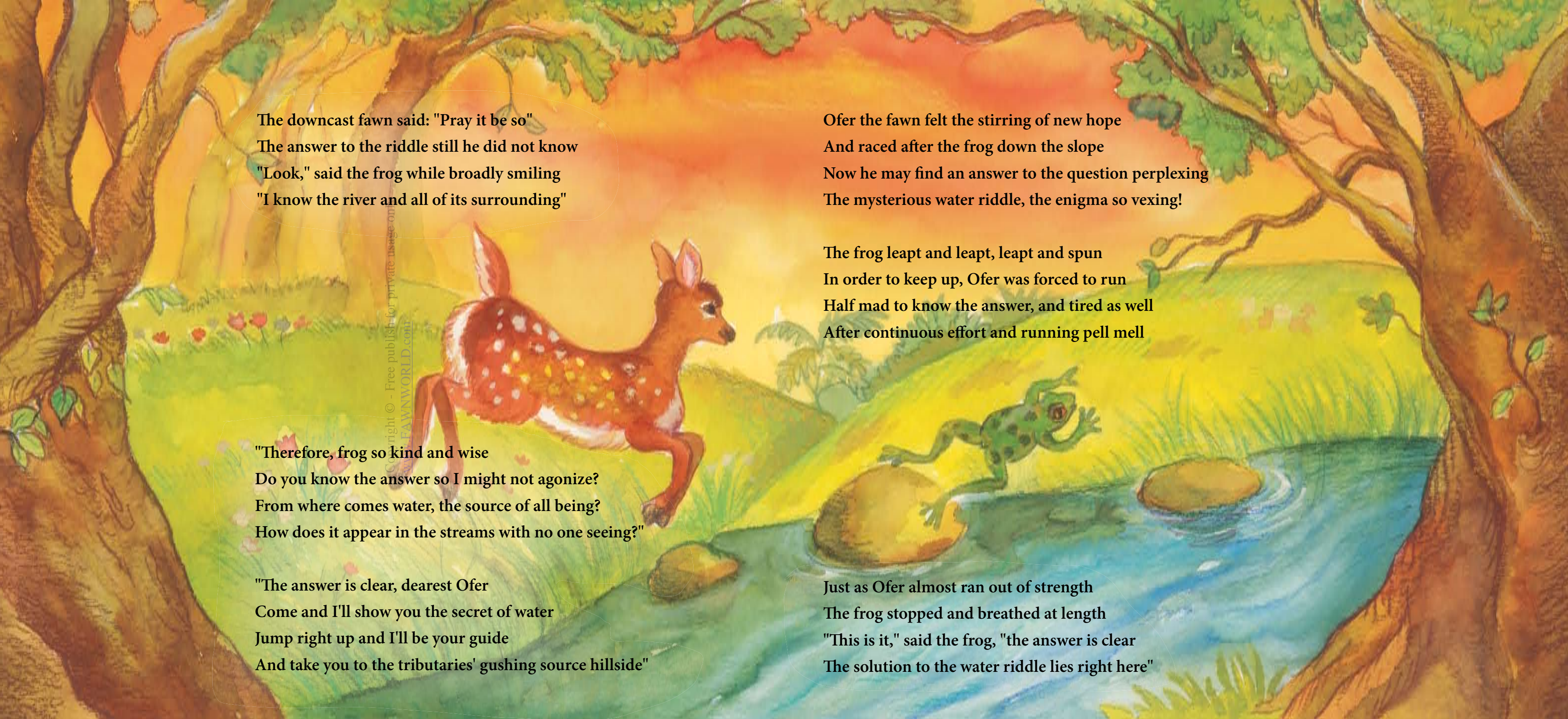
Ofer then decided on a journey to go
And this wonder for himself to witness and know
He said goodbye to family and friends
And vanished from view along the river's bends

Trudging dusty paths and hopping along
Through rough terrain he kept on going strong
Ofer could spy his friends from a distance
But although it was hard, he silently showed his persistence

After two days, Ofer came to a strange place
Where swiftly-flowing streams a churning did race
The streams joined together and formed the river
Which down to the forest abundant water did deliver

But wait a moment, thought Ofer the fawn
Although the river from the streams is born
How do the streams fill with water so wet?
What is the source? From where do the streams water get?

Looking about, Ofer saw a frog
Right next to him, sitting on a log
The frog said to Ofer: "Hey diddle, diddle
Perhaps I can help you solve the riddle?"



The downcast fawn said: "Pray it be so"
The answer to the riddle still he did not know
"Look," said the frog while broadly smiling
"I know the river and all of its surrounding"

Ofer the fawn felt the stirring of new hope
And raced after the frog down the slope
Now he may find an answer to the question perplexing
The mysterious water riddle, the enigma so vexing!

The frog leapt and leapt, leapt and spun
In order to keep up, Ofer was forced to run
Half mad to know the answer, and tired as well
After continuous effort and running pell mell

"Therefore, frog so kind and wise
Do you know the answer so I might not agonize?
From where comes water, the source of all being?
How does it appear in the streams with no one seeing?"

"The answer is clear, dearest Ofer
Come and I'll show you the secret of water
Jump right up and I'll be your guide
And take you to the tributaries' gushing source hillside"

Just as Ofer almost ran out of strength
The frog stopped and breathed at length
"This is it," said the frog, "the answer is clear
The solution to the water riddle lies right here"

Ofer stopped and held his ground
He opened his eyes and looked around
The frog stated: "This is a spring
And straight from the earth it the water does bring"

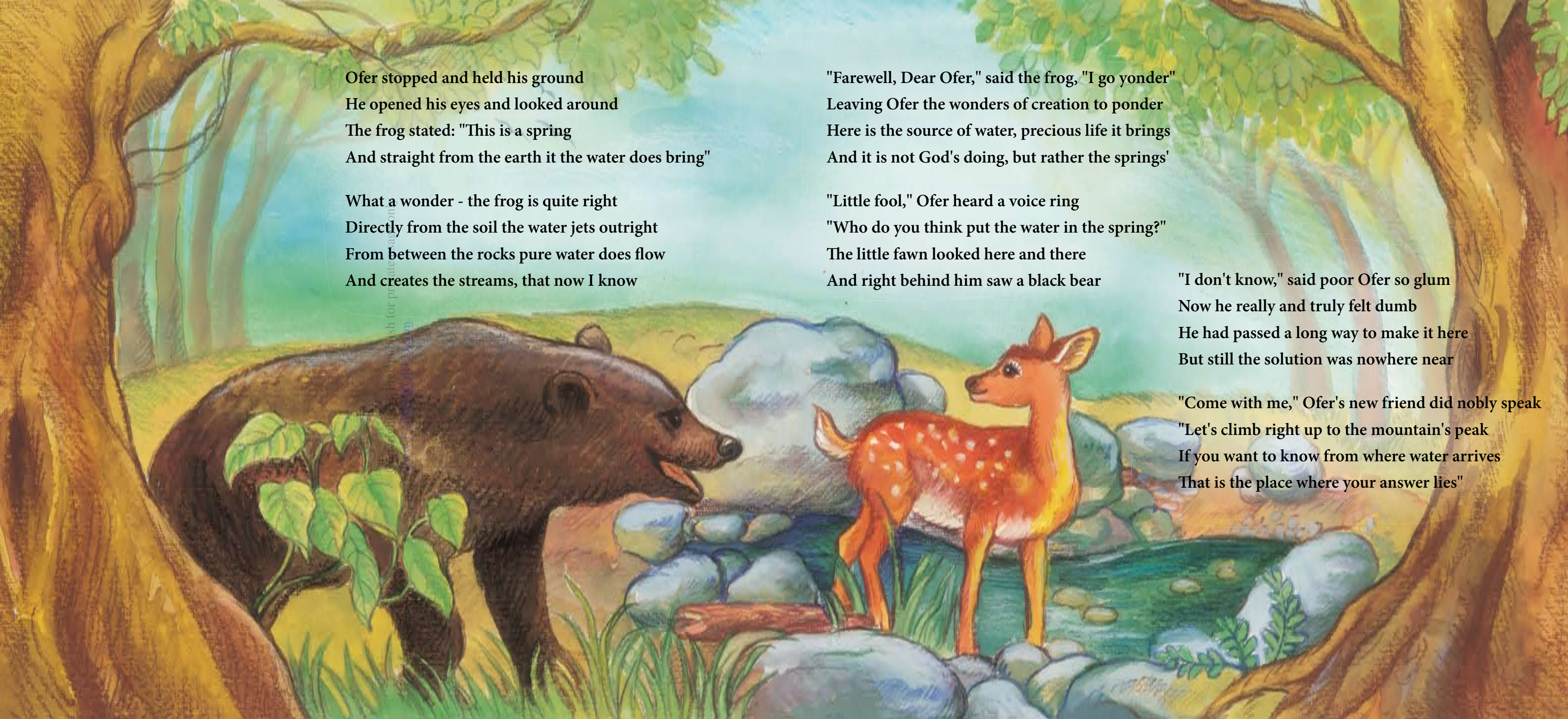
What a wonder - the frog is quite right
Directly from the soil the water jets outright
From between the rocks pure water does flow
And creates the streams, that now I know

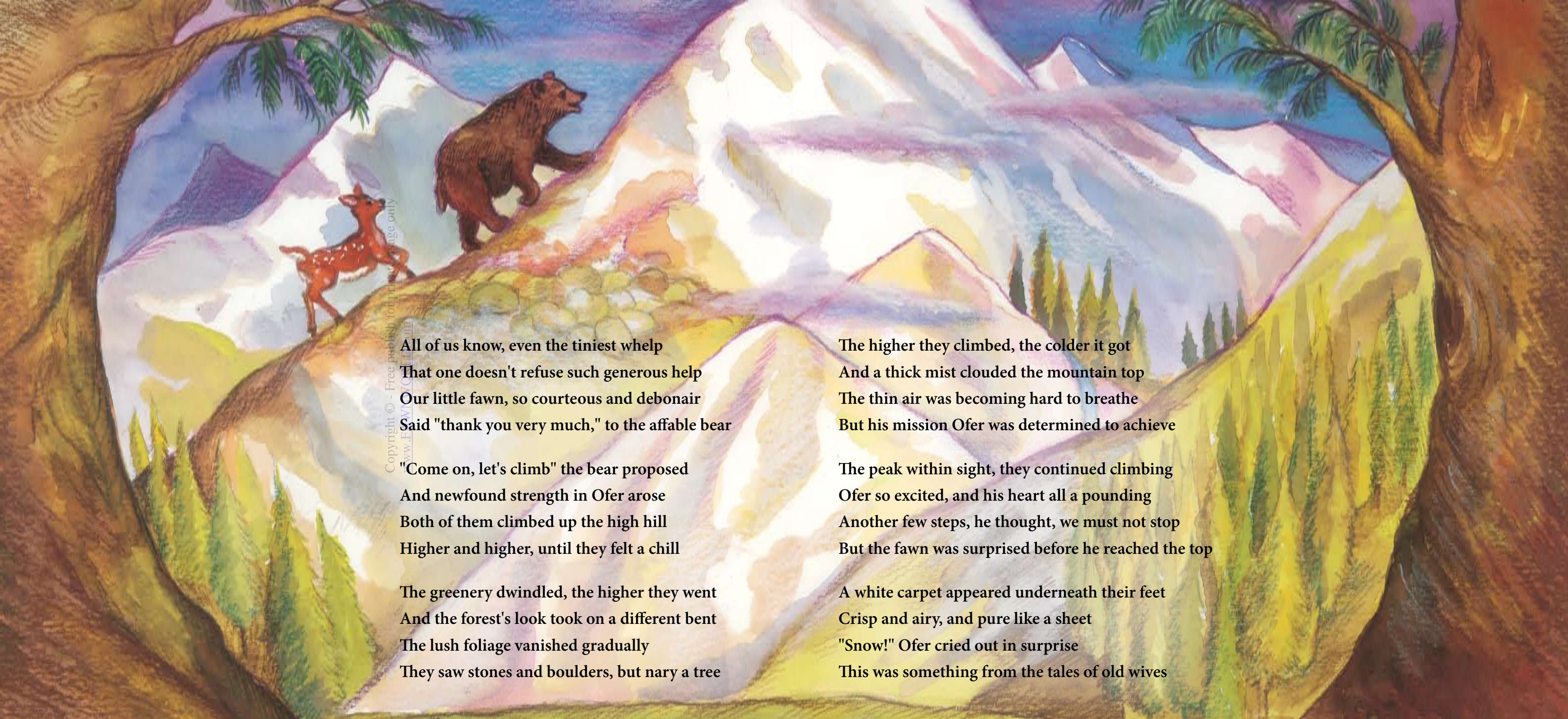
"Farewell, Dear Ofer," said the frog, "I go yonder"
Leaving Ofer the wonders of creation to ponder
Here is the source of water, precious life it brings
And it is not God's doing, but rather the springs'

"Little fool," Ofer heard a voice ring
"Who do you think put the water in the spring?"
The little fawn looked here and there
And right behind him saw a black bear

"I don't know," said poor Ofer so glum
Now he really and truly felt dumb
He had passed a long way to make it here
But still the solution was nowhere near

"Come with me," Ofer's new friend did nobly speak
"Let's climb right up to the mountain's peak
If you want to know from where water arrives
That is the place where your answer lies"





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All of us know, even the tiniest whelp
That one doesn't refuse such generous help
Our little fawn, so courteous and debonair
Said "thank you very much," to the affable bear

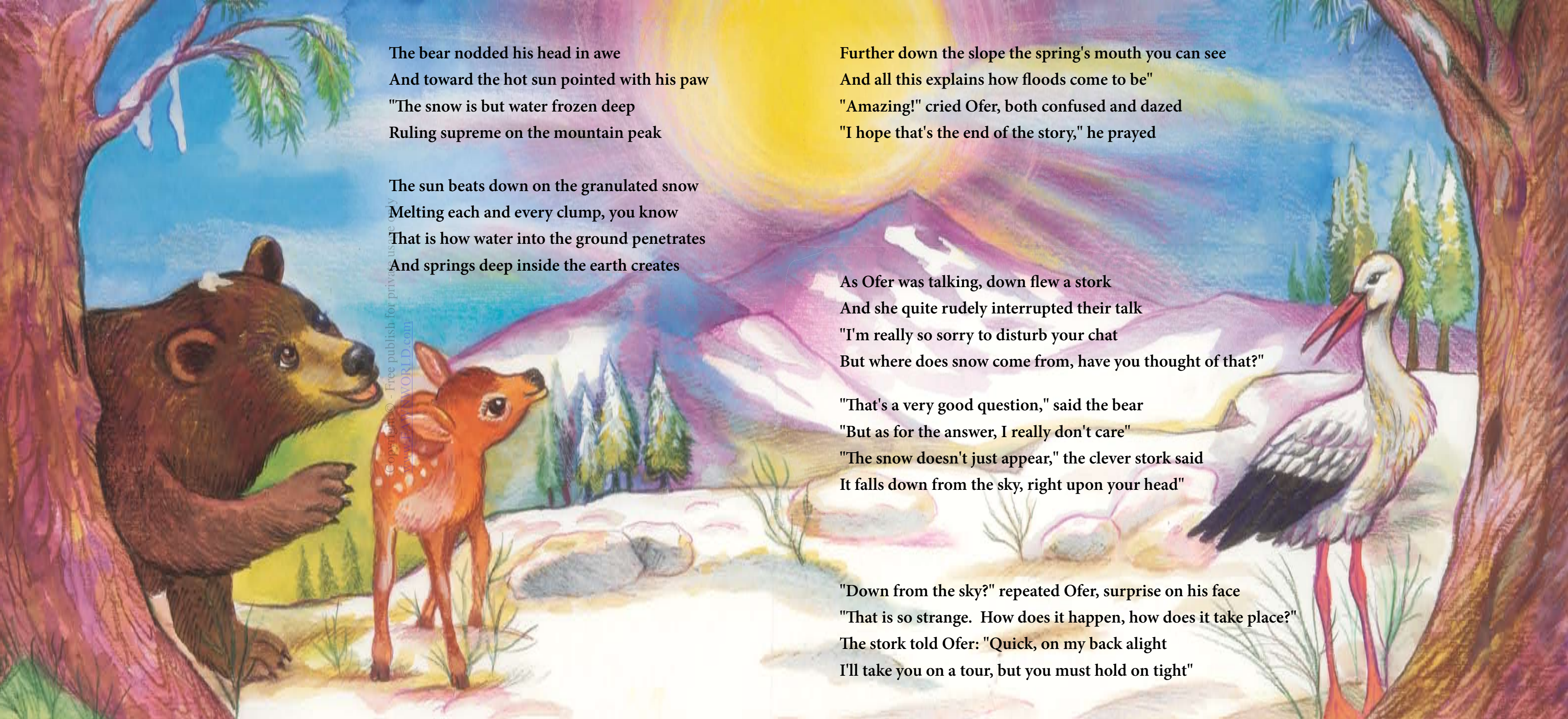
"Come on, let's climb" the bear proposed
And newfound strength in Ofer arose
Both of them climbed up the high hill
Higher and higher, until they felt a chill

The greenery dwindled, the higher they went
And the forest's look took on a different bent
The lush foliage vanished gradually
They saw stones and boulders, but nary a tree

The higher they climbed, the colder it got
And a thick mist clouded the mountain top
The thin air was becoming hard to breathe
But his mission Ofer was determined to achieve

The peak within sight, they continued climbing
Ofer so excited, and his heart all a pounding
Another few steps, he thought, we must not stop
But the fawn was surprised before he reached the top

A white carpet appeared underneath their feet
Crisp and airy, and pure like a sheet
"Snow!" Ofer cried out in surprise
This was something from the tales of old wives



The bear nodded his head in awe
And toward the hot sun pointed with his paw
"The snow is but water frozen deep
Ruling supreme on the mountain peak

The sun beats down on the granulated snow
Melting each and every clump, you know
That is how water into the ground penetrates
And springs deep inside the earth creates

Further down the slope the spring's mouth you can see
And all this explains how floods come to be"
"Amazing!" cried Ofer, both confused and dazed
"I hope that's the end of the story," he prayed

As Ofer was talking, down flew a stork
And she quite rudely interrupted their talk
"I'm really so sorry to disturb your chat
But where does snow come from, have you thought of that?"

"That's a very good question," said the bear
"But as for the answer, I really don't care"
"The snow doesn't just appear," the clever stork said
It falls down from the sky, right upon your head"

"Down from the sky?" repeated Ofer, surprise on his face
"That is so strange. How does it happen, how does it take place?"
The stork told Ofer: "Quick, on my back alight
I'll take you on a tour, but you must hold on tight"

"Yaaaaay," cried Ofer, "this is so much fun!
I'm flying through the sky; I'm closer to the sun!"
With his hooves he hugged the stork's neck tightly
And looked around pleased and smiling brightly

Underneath him the world was like a picture revealed
And the little fawn felt that nothing was concealed
The mountain, spring, creek, and the river so shiny
From such a height, even the forest seemed tiny

The world was amazing from a bird's-eye view
Stretched out below like a spring field with dew
The stork flew higher, as high as a star
And then she suddenly said: "Look, here we are"

Across them floated, giant and proud
Suspended water vapor, yes this was a cloud
An amazing feeling, a calm to treasure
Soft and silent, its touch pleasant beyond measure

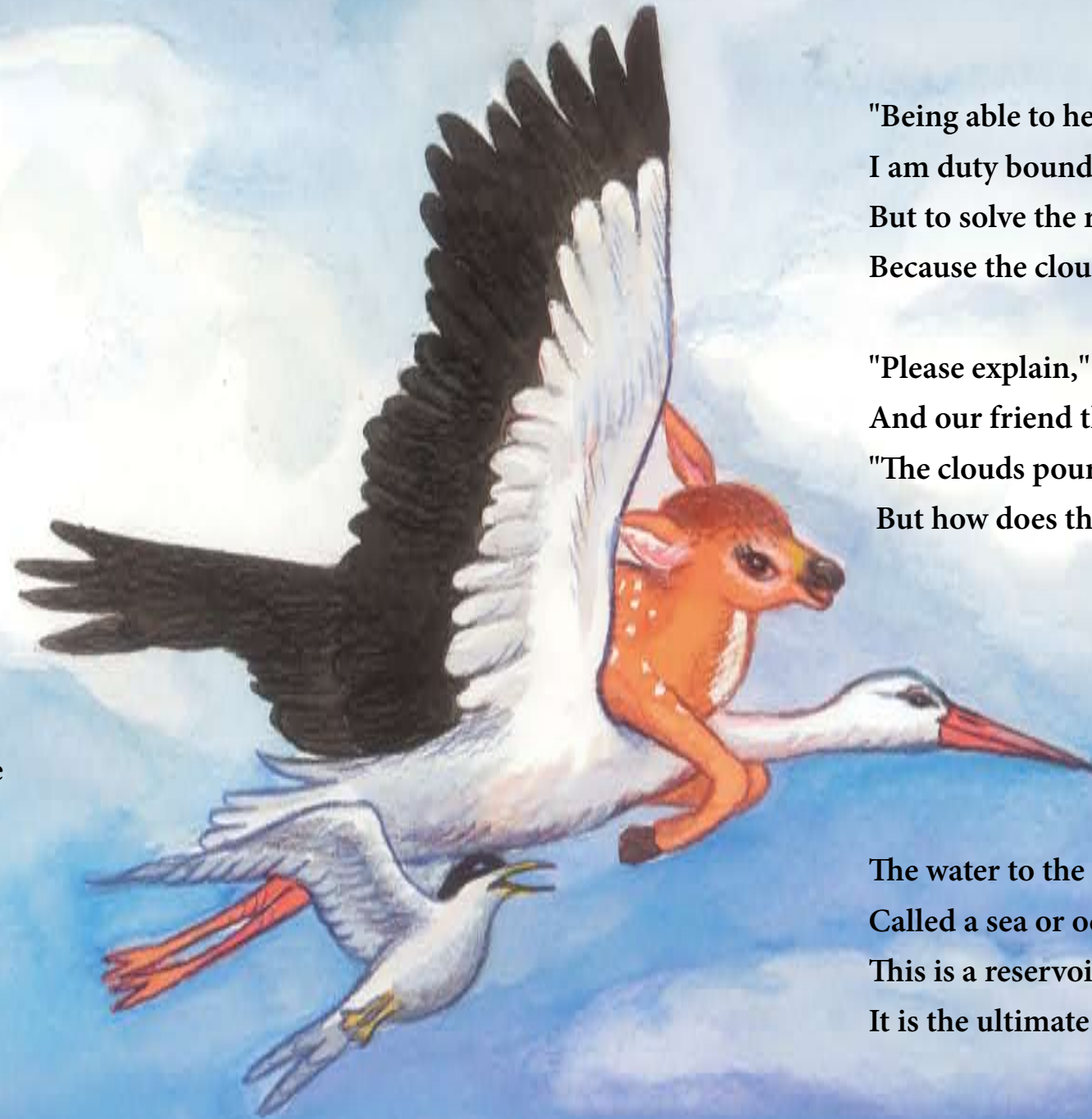
Ofer, a tourist here, normally earthbound
Toured through the cloud without making a sound
And after they enjoyed their peaceful stay
The stork interrupted the silence to say:

"The cloud is laden with frozen drops
Which in the sky float without needing to stop
The snowflakes fall at the proper time
They land on the mountain peak, forming piles of rime"

The stork and Ofer flew around the cloud
Enjoying themselves and singing out loud
But the stork grew tired and felt a bit queasy
Carrying Ofer on her back was not that easy

Therefore, in the midst of her flight
The sharp-eyed stork sought some respite
And indeed, continuing to go
She spied another fowl below

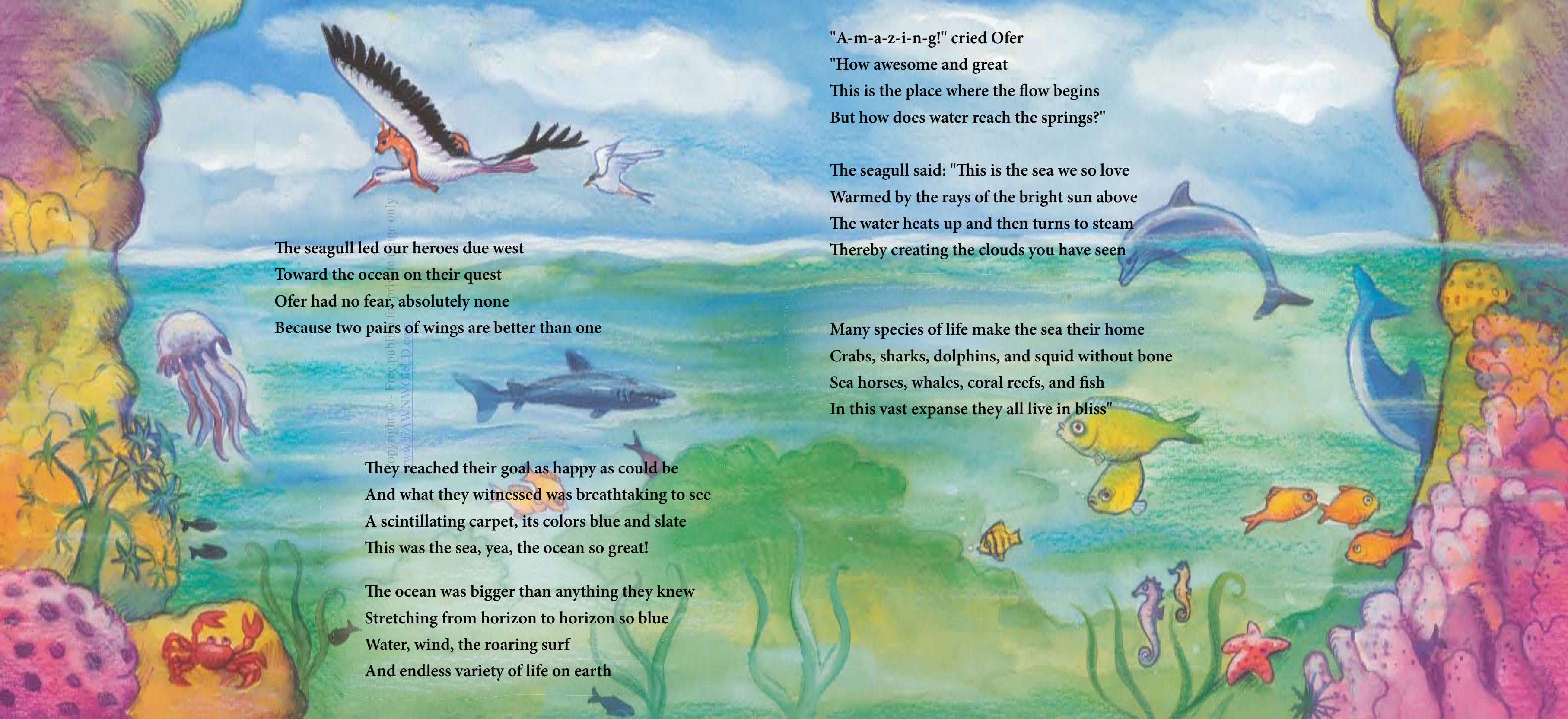
It was a seagull, handsome and white
Who was prepared to help outright
Ofer told him the whole affair
And the seagull his assistance offered right there



"Being able to help you is my great luck
I am duty bound to do so, no passing the buck
But to solve the riddle you still must think
Because the cloud definitely isn't the final link"

"Please explain," said the stork, somewhat aggrieved
And our friend the seagull most gladly agreed
"The clouds pour rain and snow from up high
But how does the water ever reach the sky?"

The water to the clouds rises from a h-u-g-e pool
Called a sea or ocean, blue, deep and cool
This is a reservoir of water so immense
It is the ultimate source, I make no pretense!"



The seagull led our heroes due west
Toward the ocean on their quest
Ofer had no fear, absolutely none
Because two pairs of wings are better than one

They reached their goal as happy as could be
And what they witnessed was breathtaking to see
A scintillating carpet, its colors blue and slate
This was the sea, yea, the ocean so great!

The ocean was bigger than anything they knew
Stretching from horizon to horizon so blue
Water, wind, the roaring surf
And endless variety of life on earth

"A-m-a-z-i-n-g!" cried Ofer
"How awesome and great
This is the place where the flow begins
But how does water reach the springs?"

The seagull said: "This is the sea we so love
Warmed by the rays of the bright sun above
The water heats up and then turns to steam
Thereby creating the clouds you have seen

Many species of life make the sea their home
Crabs, sharks, dolphins, and squid without bone
Sea horses, whales, coral reefs, and fish
In this vast expanse they all live in bliss"

"Look, a whale!" Ofer shouted loudly
As the huge creature swam up proudly
"Hello," said the whale, "to my new friends you three
I welcome you here as a delegate of the sea

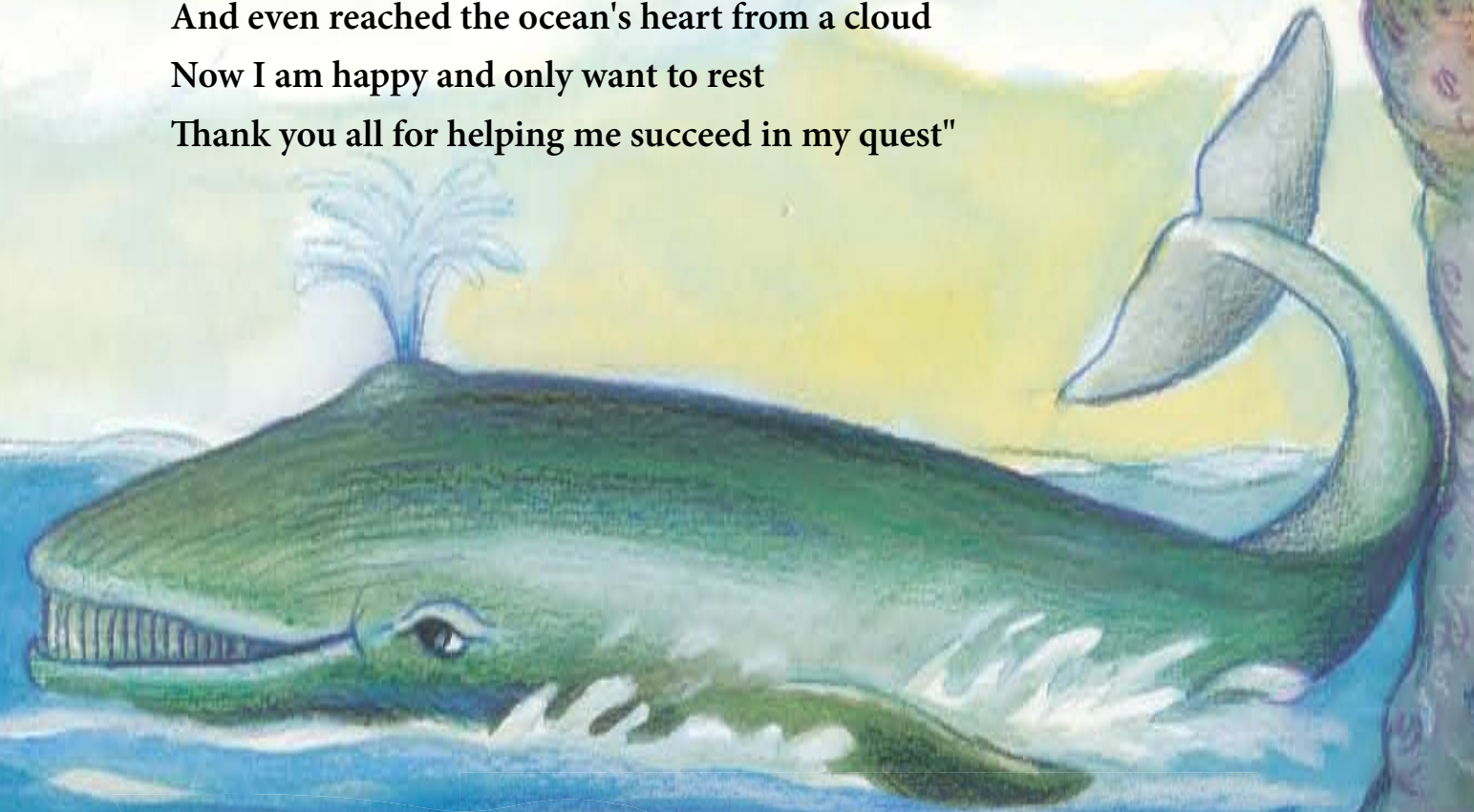
Duty bound me to keep the ocean safe and secure
Against treacherous enemies whose intentions are not pure
Let me therefore ask you most respectfully -
What have you lost here in the middle of the sea?

If you come in peace, then may you be blessed
And I promise to show you the greatest largesse
However, if you come here with harm on your mind
Then your fate will be awful and most terribly unkind!"

"God forbid! Completely pure is my intention!"
Said the fawn, insulted by the whale's aspersion
"A solution I seek to a riddle most keen
Where is the source of water unseen?"

I have crossed creeks, hills and mountains proud
And even reached the ocean's heart from a cloud
Now I am happy and only want to rest
Thank you all for helping me succeed in my quest"

The whale smiled and proposed with a roar
"Climb on my back, I can surprise you some more"
"Cool," Ofer exulted, and jumped on the whale's mass
"A leviathan taxi! Come on, step on the gas!"



Ofer held on tight as the whale set out
The wind whistling in their ears like a kettle spout
The whale swam the blue sea for many a league
Plowing through the swirling waves without showing fatigue

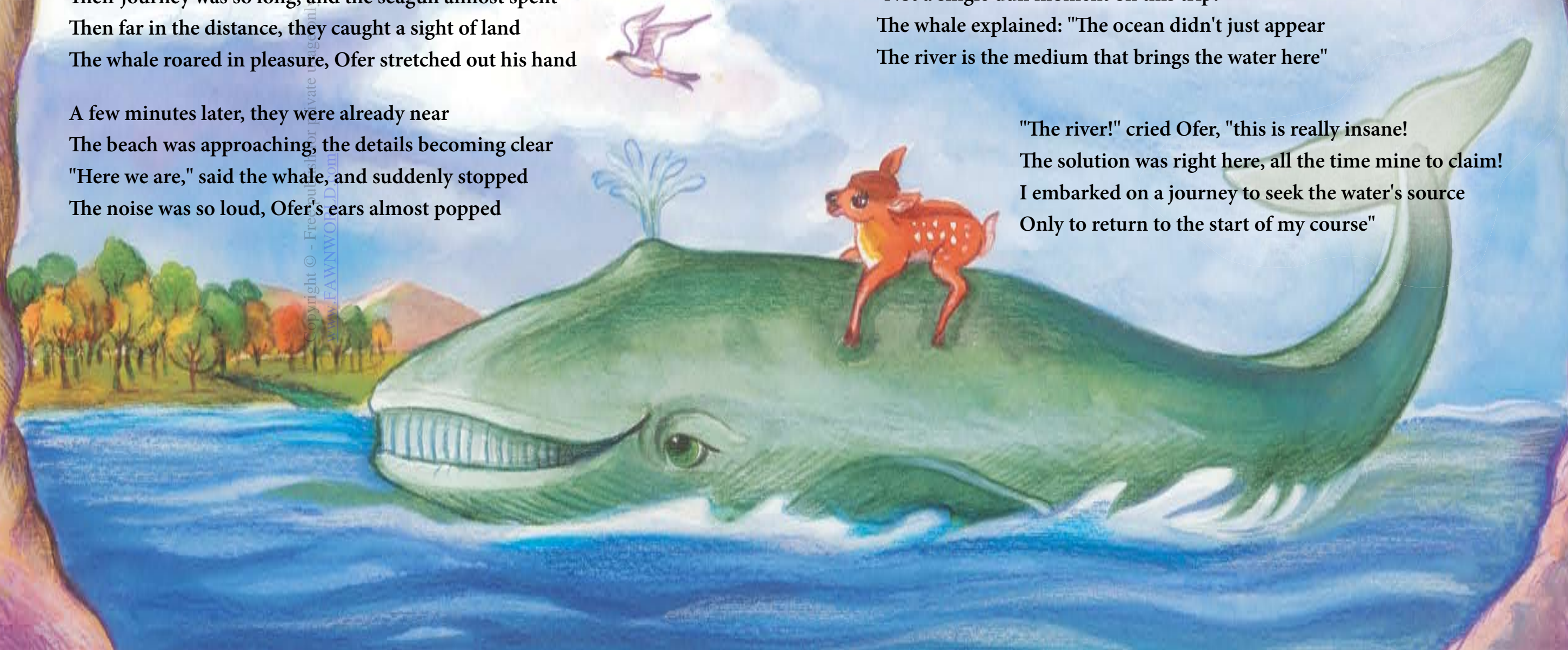
They continued on and on, Ofer most content
Their journey was so long, and the seagull almost spent
Then far in the distance, they caught a sight of land
The whale roared in pleasure, Ofer stretched out his hand

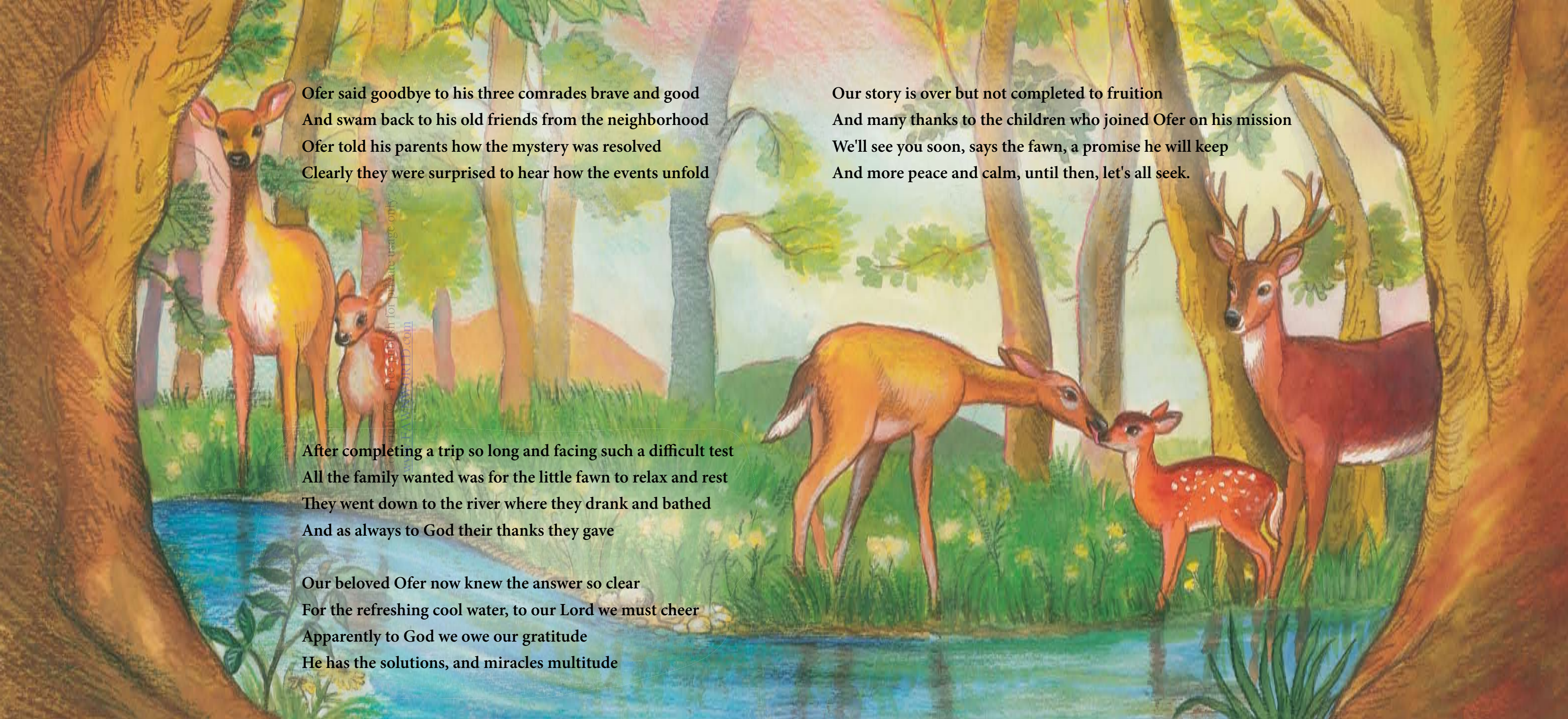
A few minutes later, they were already near
The beach was approaching, the details becoming clear
"Here we are," said the whale, and suddenly stopped
The noise was so loud, Ofer's ears almost popped

Looking ahead, Ofer was astonished anew
He found himself facing the forest he knew
Ofer recognized the surroundings familiar
All his old friends as well as the river

"What's going on here?" Ofer made a quip
"Not a single dull moment on this trip!"
The whale explained: "The ocean didn't just appear
The river is the medium that brings the water here"

"The river!" cried Ofer, "this is really insane!
The solution was right here, all the time mine to claim!
I embarked on a journey to seek the water's source
Only to return to the start of my course"





Ofer said goodbye to his three comrades brave and good
And swam back to his old friends from the neighborhood
Ofer told his parents how the mystery was resolved
Clearly they were surprised to hear how the events unfold

Our story is over but not completed to fruition
And many thanks to the children who joined Ofer on his mission
We'll see you soon, says the fawn, a promise he will keep
And more peace and calm, until then, let's all seek.

After completing a trip so long and facing such a difficult test
All the family wanted was for the little fawn to relax and rest
They went down to the river where they drank and bathed
And as always to God their thanks they gave

Our beloved Ofer now knew the answer so clear
For the refreshing cool water, to our Lord we must cheer
Apparently to God we owe our gratitude
He has the solutions, and miracles multitude

Eran Ben-Shahar

Ofer the Fawn

The Water Riddle

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“Ofer” is the biblical word for fawn

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